



## Cross Contamination

One of the biggest problems in food preparation is cross contamination. Cross contamination is an important critical control point because it is the transfer of harmful bacteria from one food such as raw food to another food such as ready-to-eat food by means of utensils, equipment and even our hands. Examples include:

- Hands of food handlers who did not properly wash after handling raw meat.
- Meat slicers or knives that are used for both raw meat and ready-to-eat meat.
- Cutting boards that are reused without sanitizing.
- Raw meat coming in contact with ready-to-eat food that will not require further cooking before serving.
- Storing raw meat or other products above ready-to-eat food allowing potential drippage.

To avoid cross contamination, never put ready-to-eat food in contact with raw food or anything that is not sanitized. The best way to avoid cross contamination when you are preparing food is by having 2 separate work areas—one for ready-to-eat food and one for raw food. Or, you can cut raw food on one cutting board, and cut the ready-to-eat food on another cutting board. If you do not have two cutting boards, make sure you **wash, rise** and **sanitize** the board and the knife after cutting raw food.

